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Teacher Perception of Principal Leadership and School Climate in Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

Kerri L. Nelson
Bethel University

Teacher Perception of Principal Leadership and School Climate in Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

Kerri Lynn Nelson

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Approved By:

Dr. Michael Lindstrom

Dr. Matthew Saferite

Dr. Stacie Stanley

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) middle schools in Iowa as perceived by teachers. Additionally, it attempted to answer whether or not school climate in PLA middle schools in Iowa is viewed the same by all staff or if there are differences based on years of teacher experience, gender and content area taught. The outcome of principal leadership (effectiveness, extra effort, and satisfaction with leadership) was assessed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire was used to measure the predicators of school climate (supportive behavior, engaged behavior, intimate behavior, directive behavior, and frustrated behavior). There were no significant differences found based on based on teachers' years of teacher experience, gender and content area taught. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between two of the areas of positive school climate (supportive behavior, engaged behavior) and all three areas of the outcome of principal leadership. There was also a statistically significant positive relationship between school climate (intimate behavior) and extra effort which is associated with the outcome of principal leadership. Additionally, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between negative school climate (frustrated behavior) and the outcome of principal leadership.

The results of the study are difficult to generalize due to a limited number of schools that were willing to participate in the study.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Donovan Nelson.

Thank you for everything.

Acknowledgments

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I have been inspired by my husband and family who has supported me, encouraged me, and believed in me. Thank you for believing in me.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Historically, principals were hired to manage the school, protect employee rights and be knowledgeable about the legal aspects of working with students and employees (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eagle, 2005; Landesfeind, 2007). Today, principals are charged with the responsibility to not only manage the school's operations but also provide the necessary leadership to turn around schools that are identified as persistently lowest-achieving. This dramatic addition in responsibility has rapidly occurred.

The role, responsibility, and work of principals in public schools has been greatly influenced by intense political conditions calling for comprehensive educational reform, greater levels of accountability for student achievement and teacher performance, and closing the achievement gap (Goodwin et al., 2005; Fawcett, 2007; Joseph, 2007; Landesfeind, 2007; Vail, 2012). These conditions create an opportunity for policymakers and school leaders to develop educational reform models which are research based, and also create a new vision, "one rooted in the recognition that schools must provide equal opportunity for all children to learn if the schools are to fulfill their vital role as the cornerstone of our democracy" (Noguera, 2010, p. 11).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and Race to the Top (RTT) federal initiatives have raised the awareness of the inequity that exists in public education and increased accountability measures for schools (Fusarelli, 2011; Noguera, 2010). However, public education in the United States has been under great scrutiny from the public sector for several decades. Over 30 years ago, the National Commission on Excellence in Education released *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* (Goldberg & Harvey, 1983). As a result of the findings in that study, a broad cross-section of the American general public began to insist upon increased accountability and funding for public schools, but there has been limited evidence of progress (Fullan, 2011). From the national perspective, there is great debate about the role of the federal government in education. Federal and state influence erodes the concept of local control and yet society has called for and continues to advocate for greater levels of accountability for student achievement and teacher performance. Advocates and politicians are calling for large-scale reform that will provide a more equitable opportunity for all children and eliminate practices that negatively affect equitable outcomes (Fusarelli, 2011; Lezotte & McKee, 2006; Noguera, 2010). This charge is central to the cornerstone of democracy (Noguera, 2010).

The distinguishing difference between past movements and more current legislation is the manner in which accountability measures are being applied and where the blame for school failure is placed. There is a strong federal and state legislative movement to increase funding for PLA schools and also a mandate to

terminate the principal and staff who work in these schools. Three of the four reform models available under RTT require termination of the principal if the principal has been at the school for two or more years. All staff are terminated under the fourth model as it requires the school to close.

Statement of the Problem

Accountability measures that are applied to schools under the NCLB Act and RTT initiatives are increasingly punitive in nature (Fullan, 2006; Fusarelli, 2011; Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010; Noguera, 2010). This legislative movement has increased sanctions for schools failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) and more specifically, persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools. Schools across the nation have failed to meet AYP and continue to face sanctions for failing to meet the standard (Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, Levy, & Saunders, 2008; Joseph, 2007; Landesfeind, 2007; Vail, 2012). AYP is the formula and measure created by each state to hold schools accountable for student achievement under the NCLB Act as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Paige, 2002). There are issues of home language, mobility, poverty, and race that are unique to each school setting and can contribute to the challenge of meeting AYP (Butler, 2012; Duke et al., 2008; Kutash et al., 2010; Vail, 2012). These factors are not considered or accounted for in how AYP is calculated as the legislation required all students to be proficient by 2014. PLA schools are identified as not meeting AYP, and are also performing in the bottom 5% of schools in each state. If an identified school makes substantial progress to be removed from the PLA designation, another school will

automatically replace them on the list as 5% of the schools from each state are required to be identified.

Schools that are identified as PLA face difficult decisions as the imposed sanctions require the school to select one of the four turnaround reform models available under RTT. Schools must agree to turnaround, close, restart, or transform under clearly specified conditions. Three of the four turnaround reform models require termination of the principal as a minimum sanction. Principals are unable to retain their employment even if the school has a long history of poor performance prior to their involvement with the school. There is no consideration given to the dynamics of the school environment or related factors such as mobility or poverty (Kutash et al., 2010). There is large scale disagreement as to the effectiveness of turnaround models as they are costly to implement, exhaust human resources, and require extensive political will for change and implementation (Kutash et al., 2010).

Some states have taken the option of not participating in RTT and others have not been able to meet the legislative requirements necessary to do so; however, at least one state has written the RTT requirements into legislative code, reinforcing the penalty for PLA schools. In 2009, the Iowa legislature passed SF 2033 which requires identified PLA schools to implement one of the four RTT reform model even if the school is ineligible for the funding that is available through the Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) (Iowa Legislature, 2009). Some have suggested there may have been varying levels of district compliance and state enforcement of Iowa's SF

2033. However, the code provides the Iowa Department of Education the authority to take action in PLA schools.

Table 1.0

Race to the Top Restructuring Turnaround Models

Restructuring Models	Model Requirements
Turnaround Model	• Replace the principal • Rehire no more than 50% of the staff • Grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes
Restart Model	• Convert the school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter manage organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process
School Closure	• Close a school • Enroll the students who attend that school in other schools in the local education association that is higher achieving.
Transformation Model	• Replace the principal • Take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness. • Implement comprehensive instructional reforms • Increase learning time and community involvement. • Create operational flexibility and sustained support

(Federal Register on October 28, 2010)

Some may consider this problem an issue that relates only to larger urban schools; yet in 2010, more than 5,000 schools from both urban and rural settings were identified as failing under the NCLB Act and criteria for PLA. This number represents 5% of our nation's schools (Kutash et al., 2010; Vail, 2012). In addition, the Center on Education Policy estimated 38% of schools nationwide did not make AYP in 2010. Additionally, the report indicated in the same year over 50% of the schools in 12 states failed to make AYP and identified Florida's school failure rate at 86% of all of schools in the state (Center on Education Policy, 2010).

The intended purpose of NCLB may have been to create greater equity, increase the performance of all schools, and create accountability measures for schools. However, the nature of NCLB is "grossly distorted in favor of external accountability while being virtually empty of capacity-building strategies that lead to the intrinsic commitment necessary for continuous improvement" (Fullan, 2011, p. 37). The system is built using incorrect motivational drivers that will have minimal impact on creating sustainable change in schools and better student learning results (Fullan, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA middle schools in Iowa as perceived by teachers. Additionally, it attempted to answer whether or not school climate in PLA middle schools in Iowa is viewed the same by all staff or if there are differences based on years of teacher experience, gender and content area taught.

Ethnicity has been intentionally omitted from the study due to limited variance in demographics of the teaching pool statewide.

Significance of the Study

This quantitative study begins to fill a gap in the literature about turnaround schools. The actual research on principal and teacher perceptions of change is limited, and few studies have been conducted in low-achieving schools (Tucker, Higgins, & Salmonowicz, 2010). NCLB and RTT have created a different set of conditions and accountability measures for low-achieving schools. The need for change is clear; however, the path to improvement is viewed differently by the two stakeholders, principals and teachers, which are known to make the greatest impact (Duke, Konold, & Salmonowicz, 2011). Researchers who have explored and investigated the need for change have focused on the perception of principals in low-achieving schools and have not considered the perceptions of teachers (Duke et al., 2011). Duke et al. (2011) and Tucker et al. (2010) have recommended more research be conducted on teacher perception of change in low-achieving schools to fill the gap in research.

Principal leadership has been identified as a critical factor that influences turnaround in low-achieving schools (Burbach & Butler, 2005; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). However, there is not a significant volume of research to suggest which principal leadership skills and abilities are necessary for low-achieving school environments (Tucker et al., 2010). There is consistent evidence principal leadership influences

school climate, but there is limited research about how teachers perceive this relationship in low-achieving environments (Cohen, Mccabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Teacher's perceptions are important as they are a significant stakeholder in the implementation process of any form of school reform.

Research Questions

RQ 1. What, if any, relationship exists between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA school settings as perceived by teachers?

RQ 2. What, if any, differences exist in school climate in PLA schools based on teacher years of experience, gender, and content area?

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): the formula and measure created by each state to hold schools accountable for student achievement under the NCLB Act as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act): Public Law 107–110. The most recent version of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The law provides funding for various federal education programs including Title I. States must comply with the criteria under this legislation to receive federal education funds.

Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA): A designation for schools that are identified as not meeting AYP, and are also performing in the bottom 5% of schools in each state.

Race to the Top (RTT): A federal education initiative and competitive process targeted for persistently lowest-achieving schools. The initiative provides funding for

PLA schools to develop rigorous standards and better assessments; improve teacher and school leader quality and implement research-based interventions to turn the school around.

Turnaround: A low-performing school that has dramatically increased student achievement and is no longer classified as a failing school.

Turnaround Model: One of the four educational reform models that are federally approved for implementation under the RTT initiative.

Limitations

It should be noted the findings of this study are limited to PLA middle schools in the state of Iowa. PLA elementary and high schools, as well as schools from other states, were excluded from this study. The study was also conducted in a rural Midwestern state. The findings may not be generalizable to all PLA school environments. Internal validity is based on the teacher's truthful response about their perception of principal leadership and school climate. Measures were taken to protect the anonymity of all teachers who participated which should help reduce the concern.

There are some limitations associated with the use of a survey. The data collected was completely based on teacher's perception or opinion of principal leadership and school climate. Perceptions and opinions can be influenced by both positive and negative experiences within the school environment. Perception is truth to the participant, but may or may not be a completely accurate reflection of the principal's leadership or school climate.

The survey was delivered electronically, and some staff may or may not have had the technology skills to complete an online survey. Mind Garden, Inc. was contracted to customize the survey format using the MLQ and OCDQ RS and create a survey link. The general set up was simple to follow. Novice technology users should have been able to navigate the system. Teachers in the pilot study did not express concerns about the use of an electronic survey rather than paper.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

There are five chapters in this research study. There is a general introduction, background and problem presented in Chapter One. Chapter One also includes the rationale and significance of the study. Chapter Two is a review of the literature as it relates to principal leadership, school climate, and teacher perceptions in low-achieving school environments. The third chapter is a narrative of the research methodology that includes a description of the research design, general setting and participants, a plan for data collection and analysis procedures. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter Four. A discussion of the findings and conclusions and implications are included in the final chapter, Chapter Five.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Low-achieving schools that have successfully turned around have used different approaches to improve academic performance and school climate (Chenoweth, 2008). Each PLA school has its own set of unique challenges and obstacles to overcome; what works in one setting may or may not work in another. However, there is some research evidence to suggest low-achieving schools can turn around in short periods of time when there is clear direction, strong principal leadership, communication, collaboration, and parent and community involvement (Fawcett, 2008).

Successful School Turnarounds

Chenoweth (2009) wrote about several schools that have made significant improvements and concluded schools that staff in these schools understood how teacher collaboration, having a laser-like focus on student achievement, using formative assessment, implementing data-driven instruction, and emphasizing personal relationships impacted their ability to make change occur in their schools. Chenoweth (2008) and Duke et al. (2008) discussed several examples of successful school turnarounds that serve as evidence that all students can achieve at high levels including minority students and students who live in poverty.

Table 2.0 includes information about some schools that have turned around or made large gains in academic achievement. Information about school size, poverty level, demographics and percent of proficient students is included.

Table 2.0

Successful School Turnarounds

School	Related Factors	Change in Proficiency			
		Reading		Math	
		Year	Percent	Year	Percent
East Millsboro Elementary Millsboro, Delaware Enrollment: 700 Grades: Preschool - Fifth	50 % Free & Reduced Lunch 25% African American 13% Latino	2008	94%	2008	95%
Stanton M. Hall Elementary Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Enrollment: 435 Grades: Preschool - Sixth	99.3% Economically Disadvantaged 99.3% African American	2001-2003 2008	Below 20% 70%	2001-2003 2008	Below 20% 83%
Port Chester Middle School Port Chester, New York Enrollment: 750 Grades: Fifth - Eighth	64% Hispanic 12 % African American Poor, working-class neighborhood in affluent area	2002 2008	56% 68%	2002 2008	66% 85%
Imperial High School Imperial Valley, California Grade: Ninth through twelfth	30 % Economically Disadvantaged 70% Latino Large population of English Language Learner students	2000 2006 2006	621 * 785* 79% to 88% proficient in English language arts	2000 2006 2006	621 * 785* 79% to 88% proficient in Math

* 800 is the maximum possible score on the California Academic Performance Index. The median is 699. The score is a composite score for the entire California Academic Performance Index.

(Chenoweth, 2008; Duke et al., 2008)

The identified schools have made some impressive gains. However, there is limited research to suggest these efforts can be sustained long term (Aladjem et al., 2010; Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Duke & Landahl, 2011; Kutash et al., 2010). Duke (2006) suggested the challenge of school improvement is not increasing test scores. Rather, he suggested sustaining the upward trajectory is more difficult. Other research (Datnow, 2005; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006) has supported Duke's conjecture that the sustainability of increased student achievement, the results, and impact of an intervention is dependent on the depth of implementation and whether or not the selected intervention is continued over time.

Kearney and Herrington (2012) conducted a study of Lackland City Elementary, a school classified by some as a 90/90/90 school. Lackland City Elementary school has a 90% rate of poverty, a 90% minority student population and a 90% proficiency rate in reading and math. These results have been demonstrated consistently from 2007 to 2010. Three common themes were identified in the study that was completed by Kearney and Herrington (2012). They identified support structures (i.e., hiring practices, professional development, principal leadership and staff input), relationships, and consistency as factors influencing why Lackland City Elementary has been able to sustain the results.

Budgetary Constraints

Additional factors such as budgetary constraints, area of staff focus and learning environment also influence the feasibility of turnaround school change and

sustainability (Parret & Budge, 2009). Budgetary constraints are concerning for PLA schools; however, Odden and Archibald (2000) found schools can implement high-cost reform measures simply by selectively abandoning ineffective past practice and reallocating categorical funding sources to support new initiatives. Additionally, in a study of 15 elementary schools that achieved turnaround, Duke (2006a) noted the majority of schools did receive "additional resources" (p. 35). However, he also stated the commitment of staff, the leadership of the principal, and community support had a larger impact on improving the school (Duke, 2006a). While Duke's comments on commitment, principal leadership, and community support are credible, many low-achieving schools cannot provide interventions that are known to be effective without additional funds. Also, some low-achieving schools may find it difficult to identify what interventions are important to keep in place and fund because they do not have a culture involving analysis and action research. However, funding for low-achieving schools is necessary to implement expensive reform measures whether new money is made available to the school or existing financial resources are reallocated.

Funding for PLA schools. Increased funding for state education agencies (SEAs) is available to improve the academic standing and school climate at identified PLA schools in the form of competitive federal Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG). SEA's are authorized to provide sub-grants to Tier I and Tier II PLA schools that have the greatest need and make a significant commitment to raise student achievement (Federal Register, 2010). SEA's identify three tiers of PLA schools;

only Tier I and Tier II are eligible to compete for a SIG sub-grant. The definition of greatest need for Tier I and Tier II schools included in the Federal Register can be found in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Greatest Need for SIG Funding

Tier I Schools Secondary or Elementary	Tier II Schools Secondary	Tier III Schools Secondary or Elementary
Qualify as a Title I, Part A school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring and is identified by the SEA as a PLA school Has not made AYP for at least two consecutive years Performed in the State's lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined	Qualify for, but does not receive, Title I, Part A funds and is identified by the SEA as a PLA school Has not made AYP for at least two consecutive years Performed in the State's lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined Has a graduation rate as defined that is less than 60 % over a number of years	Qualify as a Title I, Part A school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring Has not made AYP for at least two consecutive years Performed in the State's lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; Does not meet the requirements to be a Tier I or Tier II school

(Federal Register, 2010)

SIG funding is intended to assist qualifying PLA schools with the implementation of one of the four approved RTT restructuring turnaround models to demonstrate significant commitment to raise student achievement. However, there are restrictive requirements and accountability measures included in the SIG application that are conditions of receipt of the actual SIG funds. PLA schools that apply for SIG funding must sign a formal memorandum of understanding that identifies the RTT restructuring turnaround model that will be implemented. The memorandum outlines the requirements for the selected model allowing districts to terminate the principal and take actions that may conflict with master contracts with teacher unions in the area of teacher evaluation, seniority, and termination. Table 1.0 lists the general requirements for each of the acceptable RTT restructuring turnaround models.

PLA schools that select the RTT turnaround or transformational model are allowed to remain open as long as they follow the requirement to make personnel changes. The actual SIG funding provides schools with financial resources to implement specified school reform measures. Funding must be used to demonstrate increased use of data to identify and implement a school improvement program that is research-based and also promotes the continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction. It is also permissible to use SIG funding to 1) conduct curriculum implementation reviews, 2) implement school-wide response to intervention (RtI), 3) provide additional support and professional development for staff working with students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, and 4)

integrate technology-based supports and interventions (Federal Register on October 28, 2010). The regulations also encouraged PLA schools to use SIG funding to increase rigor, improve transition, increase graduation rates, and identify at-risk students at the secondary level. Extended learning time and improving school climate are also areas prioritized for SIG Funding (Federal Register, 2010).

In September of 2014, some revisions to the SIG funding requirements were released that extended the length of funding to five years, providing states additional authority to select school improvement models; and allowing rural school districts some additional flexibility (Federal Register, 2014).

The priorities for SIG funding are substantial reform measures that are likely to result in increased student achievement if implemented with fidelity. Implementation involves extensive professional development, extended learning time, improved use of technology, increased levels of staff and compensation for high performing staff members. These costly reform measures are unlikely to be sustained beyond the initial SIG funding. Duke and Landahl's (2011) case study of an elementary principal leading a school in the third year of a turnaround process found the effort to increase student achievement was not as difficult as sustaining the improvement long term. PLA schools are only allowed to access SIG funds once, and the funding is only for three years. Improving school climate is a permissible area of focus for PLA schools, but what happens when the funding in place to support the interventions that were used to improve the school climate is no longer in place?

School Climate

As early as the 1900s, school climate and school environment were discussed and written about as variables that impact learning. By the mid-century, research studies were designed to identify the relationship between school climate and student learning and general school effectiveness. Most studies during this period relied heavily on variables that were related to the physical characteristics of the school and did not delve into the socio-cultural and emotional dimensions also known to "color and shape" school climate (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 183).

The term school climate evolved from the work of Perry (1908) who first used the term in his book, Managing the City School. Today there is not a single definition of school climate although there are terms such as "atmosphere, feeling, tone and milieu" which are consistently used to describe the construct (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 182; Homana, Barber, & Torney-Purta, 2006). The National Center for Learning and Citizenship Education Commission of States, and the Center for Social and Emotional Education have developed consensus that school climate encompasses the "quality and character of school life" (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 182). The National School Climate Council established "school climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning, and organizational structures" (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013, p. 2). Cohen (2006) and Freiberg (1999) have identified safety, teaching and learning, relationships, environmental structural,

and the school improvement process as dimensions that are consistently discussed in the research and professional literature about school climate. Each of these themes contributes to the conversation differently, but some may have a more significant impact on the potential for school turnaround.

There is a sizeable amount of evidence to link positive school climate as a factor influencing student achievement and general school success (Cohen et al., 2009). Bogler's (2005) and Water's et al. (2003) research identified principal leadership as a strong factor in the development of school climate and academic achievement. This finding supports Barth's (1990) research who also found principal leadership is a significant element in building positive school climate and is correlated with improved student achievement. It is important to consider teachers' perceptions of school climate as Johnson and Stevens (2006) found there is a correlation to student achievement.

There is a gap in the literature about the role of school climate in turnaround school settings. Most of the related research has been related to staff and curricular needs (Center for Social and Emotional Education, 2012).

Successful School Climate Turnarounds

There are a few documented success stories of school climate turnarounds. The Center for Education Policy released a report in 2012 on how SIG funding has been used to improve school climate. The researchers conducted 35 interviews and six implementation reviews districts with SIG funding. The findings indicated that

each school that received funding prioritized addressing school climate prior other school improvement measures. While various strategies were included, the use of school uniforms was implemented in at least one school. Efforts were also made to increase teacher collaboration and morale (Center for Education Policy, 2012).

Gholson Middle School in Prince George's County Public School elected to use School Improvement Grant funding exclusively to change school climate. The Center for Education Policy reported prior to receiving SIG funding the school had a serious problem with suspensions, in just one school year there were 1,000 suspensions. The principals implemented a strict business-like dress code and made efforts to change the total image of the school. The principal claimed the change in school climate was one of the largest successes, and the staff are now able to focus on the academic needs of the school. Additionally, the school has developed a strong partnership with a community outreach program that has been instrumental in the turnaround process (Center for Education Policy, 2012).

In an effort to improve student and staff morale the Jefferson Middle School in the Caldwell School District introduced incentives for student performance and staff participation in professional development. For example, teachers who completed various training could earn various forms of technology, i.e., mimeo pads or a document camera. Teachers with increased student achievement were also provided bonuses with SIG funds (Center for Education Policy).

Popular Views of Leadership

In the book, Leadership is an Art, author Max Depree (2004) discussed three prevailing themes that are essential to effective leadership in most all contexts: integrity; building and nurturing relationships; and community building. He defined the art of leadership as "liberating people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible…true leaders enable his or her followers to realize their full potential" (p. 164). John Maxwell has written a variety of books that have similar themes, including Winning with People: Discover the People Principles That Work For You Every Time. Maxwell (2004) also discussed the need to "help people reach their full potential" (p 105). In order for leadership to help people reach their full potential and build the capacity of staff, they must recognize the diversity of their staff and the strengths they possess. Depree (2004) stated,

> "this begins with an understanding of the diversity of people's gifts, talents and skills. Understanding and accepting diversity enables us to see that each of us is needed. It also enables us to begin to think about being abandoned [or relinquishing ourselves] to the strengths of others, admitting that we cannot know or do everything" (p. 9).

Leadership is often associated with power, strength, and being in charge; and yet, many effective leaders rarely demand such authority. Rather, effective leaders acknowledge they are given such authority by those who follow them. Depree (2004) further suggested that evidence of effective leadership can be identified in the follower. Effective leaders have followers who exhibit that they are reaching their

potential, achieving results, demonstrating new learning, can manage conflict and change with grace (Depree, 2004).

Effective leaders recognize the need to build the capacity of other people within the organization to take on leadership roles within the current and future system. Depree (2004) maintained that effective leaders should leave behind them assets and legacy, and are responsible for future leadership. Fullan (2001) indicated "Leadership, then, is not mobilizing others to solve problems we already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never yet been successfully addressed " (p. 3). This is important to recognize as the role of leadership is not to create employees who will only do exactly as they are told and instructed. Leadership of this type may result in well-maintained operations, streamlined processes and procedures within an organization, but rarely results in an organization where staff are innovative, creative and flexible enough to adapt to the ever-changing work environment of modern schools (Fullan, 2001).

Depree (2004) described the "first responsibility of a leader as defining reality and the last responsibility as saying thank you" (p. 11). In between defining reality and saying thank you, Depree (2004) suggested that effective leaders become servants and debtors. On the contrary, Collins (2001) described effective leaders, which he refers to as level five leaders, differently. Collins considered labeling leadership as selfless or servant like is an incomplete description and wrote, "if you only get the humility side, you miss the whole idea" (p. 30). Collins (2001) further described

level five leaders in a far more aggressive manner, stating they are "fanatically driven, infected with an incurable need to produce results. They will sell the mills or fire their brother, if that is what it takes to make the company great" (p. 30). Collins' (2001) definition of effective leaders is complex in nature, as personal humility and professional will are leadership traits that are not necessarily considered complimentary skill sets or traits. However, Collins (2001) stated in his writing, level five leaders project their drive towards the company rather than themselves.

Depree's (2004), Maxwell's (2004), and Collins' (2001) work does not meet the same level academic standard as peer reviewed research, but it is relevant to the discussion. There are different leadership philosophies, definitions of best practice, and general beliefs that may be formed from the popular literature that can have an influence on the general leadership practices applied in school settings.

Impact of Principal Leadership

Principal leadership and practices are important to defining the learning climate of the school and also impact student achievement. Leadership impacts the attitudes, perceptions and the environment of the school (Shatzer, Calderella, Hallam, Brown, 2013). Researchers (Kutash et al., 2010; Vail, 2012) indicated the principal is the key factor in whether or not schools will turnaround. Review of literature would suggest that principal leadership is not the only factor that impacts student achievement (Hallinger, Beck, & Davis, 1990; Leitner, 1994); yet, there is limited evidence to suggest schools turnaround without principal leadership (Lezotte &

McKee, 2006). Principals hired for a school designated for restructuring must have access to necessary resources, and must also clearly understand what "turnaround" means and have a clear understanding of the district's expectation for change. Creating a shared vision, engaging in staff discussion, and setting high expectations are critical roles for the principal. The principal must convey to staff that it is possible to be successful in such a setting despite the circumstances of their environment such as high levels of poverty. Additionally, principals must have strong understanding of the problems that exist and ability to identify the root cause of the existing learning gap (Duke, 2014, Duke & Landahl, 2011; Joseph, 2007; Salmonowicz, 2009; Thomas, 2013; Vail 2012). Vail (2012) found superintendents place great value on the principal's ability to motivate staff, create innovation, implement important strategies and hold staff accountable. These traits are significant factors in leading a turnaround school yet building principals must also provide solid management for the school.

Principal Leadership In Turnaround Schools

Leading in turnaround schools is a bold process of shifting the culture and climate of the school. It also involves evaluating and reshaping policies, procedures, and practices that may either contribute or interfere with the teaching and learning process. It also requires schools to provide an equal opportunity for all children and change practices that negatively affect equitable outcomes (Fusarelli, 2011). In this environment and with accountability for student achievement results, principals must understand and skillfully execute the change process to be effective.

Low-achieving schools have an urgent problem that needs to be addressed. There are significant consequences for failing to take action to make improvement in the school setting. It is not unusual for principals and other school leaders to respond by tightening expectations, procedures and routines to achieve an expected result; however, Fullan (2006) cautioned readers that "command-and-control strategies" often do achieve the expected result but do not result in systematic long term change (p. 37). At the same time, Fullan (2006) also suggested that the need for change is lost if staff are afforded too much discretion in the implementation process. He suggested the "solution to motivating people is to establish the right blend of tightness or looseness, or more accurately build both into the interactive culture of the organization" (p. 37). Fullan's work has become increasingly critical of tightly controlled reform measures and principals that focus on accountability systems rather than focusing on further developing the capacity of staff (Fullan, 2011, p. 8). He identified accountability as the wrong driver and suggests that at best this type of focus provides short-term improvements that can never establish conditions for whole system reform (Fullan, 2011, p. 8).

Leading Change Efforts

Principals assigned to low-achieving schools are leading in very difficult environments that require the ability to understand the impact of complex societal issues of the problem, identify the root cause, select the correct invention and implement the solution with a staff that has varying levels of skill and ability (Fullan, 2006). Often principals in such settings find them themselves in situations where dire

change is necessary, and urgency has been established. However, not all staff are naturally inclined to embrace change and the fear of failure, and the related sanctions are insufficient to move them to taken action (Fullan, 2006). Fullan (2006) claimed that most teachers do not take personal ownership of the problems found in low-achieving schools and do not identify their own work as part of the solution. The findings in a study of 15 low-achieving elementary schools conducted by Duke (2006b), present contrary evidence that suggests most teachers are willing to working differently to increase student achievement, participate in professional development, and are willing to accept leadership roles when asked. Deutschmann (2005) indicated the key to leading change was to help people understand they can have more positive experiences and feelings about their situation. John Kotter of the Harvard Business School has proposed an 8-step process for initiating change: 1) establishing urgency, 2) creating a guiding coalition, 3) developing a vision and strategy, 4) communicating the change vision, 5) empowering broad-based action, 6) generating short-term wins, 7) consolidating gains and producing more challenge, and 8) anchoring new approaches in the culture (Kotter, 1996, p. 21). Kotter (1996) described a top-down model for implementing change; and yet, his writing places emphasis on finding the right people and establishing trust amongst team members. Strong professional relationships are required for the change process to be successful. Fullan (2001) found the

> "single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better. If

> they remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus, leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups---especially with people different than themselves" (p. 5).

The current approaches to reforming low-achieving schools do not always work as they are implemented using theories of control and standardization and lack participation in the process of redeveloping the school (Fullan, 2006). There are some elements of successful change and practical strategies Fullan (2006) identified that are critical for invoking system change in low-achieving schools: 1) define closing the gap as the overarching goal, 2) attend initially to the three basics (literacy, numeracy, and well-being of students), 3) be driven by tapping into people's dignity and sense of respect; 4) ensure the best people are working on the problem; 5) change by doing rather than change by elaborate planning; 6) work continuously on building the capacity of staff, 7) stay the course and leverage leadership, 8) build internal accountability linked to external accountability, 9) establish conditions for the evolution of positive pressure, and 10) use the previous nine strategies to build public confidence (Fullan, 2006, p. 44-45). Extending empathy, building capacity, reinforcing high standards, and promoting trust are strategies that are more likely to provide motivation and produce greater results in the effort to turn schools around (Fullan, 2006).

"If we have learned anything about effective change in schools or any complex organization, it is that neither managerial imperatives nor inspirational speeches will be sufficient to move people and organizations from their entrenched

positions" (Reeves, 2009, p. 7). Effective leaders recognize managing the change process should not be underestimated and evaluate the magnitude of change as they consider the implementing improvement initiatives. This requires an understanding of differences between first and second order change. First order changes are more simplistic in nature, easily learned, and uniform with general system norms and practices. Second order changes involve new ways of thinking, the development of new skill and acquiring new knowledge, and are a shift from past practice. The main difference between the two types of pending change is how they are perceived by others in the organization (Waters, Eck, McIver, Peterson, & Lyons, 2009). Bartunek and Moch (1987) discussed the impact of first and second order change on organizational development and also included a third type of change. Leadership intentionally plans and facilitates second order change by focusing efforts on eliminating past practices. In contrast, third order change is when staff can independently recognize when second order change is necessary and are supported in the process of making change occur (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). In third order change, leadership intentionally trains staff to be cognizant of their personal perspective, so they are more adaptable to change (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). Effective leaders also know "people will attempt to change their behavior if they believe it will be worth it, and they can do what is required. Instill these two views, and individuals will at least try to enact a new behavior" (Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillian, & Sitzler, 2008, p. 71-72).

Principal Leadership Styles

The principal's leadership style is an imperative component in the change process as it strongly influences the total school climate (Boglar, 2001) and academic achievement (Waters et al., 2003). Leadership styles of principals leading successful turnaround schools are varied and according to a review of 15 case studies of elementary turnarounds completed by Duke (2006) may not be an essential factor in the turnaround process (p. 23). Early literature focused on how educational leadership by administrators and teachers improved results and identified leadership models such as situational leadership, trait theories, and contingency theory. More recent empirical studies have considered the effectiveness of transformational and instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Shatzer et al., 2013; Vail, 2012). Transformational leadership and instructional leadership are both widely accepted models of leadership, but there are distinct differences in the how the models are applied (Shatzer et al., 2013).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is not applied in a uniform structure or constant manner (Leithwood et al., 2006; Shatzer et al., 2013). Instructional leadership is hierarchical in nature and advances top down yet it is not dismissive of school climate or collaboration (Butler, 2013; Hallinger, 2003; Shatzer et al., 2013). Conceptually instructional leadership is a three-pronged process of defining and clarifying the mission, managing the curriculum, instruction and assessment program, and positive school climate (Hallinger, 2003). The principal does not allow the mission and

purpose to become stagnant; rather they consistently communicate the message across the entirety of the school community. The work of the principal is entrenched in managing the entire instructional process, supervising the implementation of curriculum and ensuring student learning goals are met. The principal facilitates a school climate of high expectations and learning (Shatzer et al., 2013). Marks and Printy (2003) have expanded upon Hallinger's conceptual model of instructional leadership also to include using time for teacher collaboration, facilitating professional growth, and implementing professional learning communities.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has a focus on developing the capacity of the entire school community to lead change, guide and direct. Staff are far more autonomous in their decision making under transformational leaders as the leadership is more distributed and orchestrated from a bottom-up approach. Transformational leaders focus on developing a common or shared vision and consensus amongst current version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Hallinger, 2003; Shatzer et al., 2013). Transformational leaders are characterized as being able to articulate a vision, motivate others, differentiate individual needs and establish a culture of learning or intellect (Shatzer et al., 2013).

Central Office Support for the Turnaround Process

In a study, conducted by Duke and Salmonwicz (2011), about teacher perceptions of what needs to change in low-achieving schools, teachers ranked the

need for more central office support for their work as the second highest need. The researchers compared the results of this teacher perception study with the results of a previous study about principal perceptions. Principals rated the need for more central office support differently than the teachers (Duke & Salmonwicz, 2011). Papa and English (2011) suggested low-performing schools cannot improve without changing the entire system (central office) and further suggest "low performing schools are really just a symptom of school district dysfunctionality and faulty decision making" (loc 1906) by central office staff and school boards.

Conditions for Change

Research on the effectiveness of such restructuring measures is limited; yet, the literature that is available identifies some conditions that must be met for schools to turnaround (Duke, 2006; Duke & Landahl, 2011; Kutash et al., 2010; Salmonowicz, 2009). In order to invoke change and for schools to turnaround leadership must expand the capacity of the school by establishing higher expectations for performance in all aspects of the organizations, providing training for staff, and recruiting and attracting new talent. Districts must adequately and equitably fund innovations and program efforts to targeted improvements either by repurposing or establishing new sources of revenue. There must also be community and political will to change. Engaging stakeholders and building awareness about the need for change is essential. All involved must understand the conditions of the work and recognize the change will require extensive collaborative efforts between all

stakeholders. The work being done to change the curriculum, design interventions, and use new instructional strategies must go beyond surface to be implemented with integrity (Duke, 2006; Duke & Landahl, 2011; Kutash et al., 2010). Such efforts require extensive planning, goal setting and collaboration along with additional support for teachers and principals. Principals must have the professional drive, ability and defined autonomy to lead the change process (Duke & Landahl, 2011; Kutash et al., 2010; Vail, 2012; Waters et al., 2009).

Sustainability of change efforts rely heavily on some conditions and supports related to implementing a system-wide reform that is comprehensive and well planned (Dantow & Stringfield, 2011). Dantow and Stringfield further suggested that school leadership and staff often do not have adequate background and experience to make appropriate decisions about system-wide improvements. While dictating or forcing a school improvement path is not an approach that will result in long term sustained results, principal need to be "well-informed" stewards of the related issues (strengths and weaknesses) and provide leadership in the identification of system-wide reforms (p. 192). Principals also need to help teachers develop the capacity to be critical partners in the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of a school and to consider how reform may improve the school.

Duke (2006) completed a study of 15 elementary schools that had successfully turned around with sustained results and found that there were several common lessons to sustaining the change. His findings included the necessity of

comprehensive change that were systemic in nature, the value of customizing the change to meet the need of the actual school environment, the implementation of some essential changes which include but are not limited to an agreed upon focus, distributed leadership, a focus on literacy and extensive use of data (Duke, 2006, p 29-30). Additionally, Duke (2006) cited the need to reconsider the traditional structure of the elementary school and also described the new elementary as a "complex and complicated organization involving more team teaching and team planning, greater reliance on specialists and variable schedules dictated by student needs" (p. 30). While some may consider teachers the root of the problem in many low-achieving schools, Duke (2006) strongly stated the "teachers are not impediments" (p. 30) and rather suggested most teachers are willing and able to be part of the solution to invoke large scale change and improve schools. The final lesson Duke (2006) outlined was a caution to avoid making assumptions about what students can do. The school staff included in these case studies spent ample time ensuring students understood what was expected and also prepared students for high stakes exams (p. 31).

Dantow and Stringfield (2011) stated a critical concern about the skill set and ability of principals; they at times lack experience and background necessary to make key decisions about how to turn the school around. There is a tremendous need to prepare principals to be successful in turning around low-achieving schools. The Florida Turnaround Leaders Program (FTLP) has taken aggressive steps to make changes to how principals are trained and prepared for such settings. Duke (2014)

described each of the five critical components included in the FTLP theory of action as the awareness, understanding, planning, competence and commitment (p. 81). Principals leading in turnaround settings need to have a keen awareness of the related issues that impact academic performance and understand why they exist. Additionally, principals must have the ability to develop well thought out plans and the ability to follow through with the required actions. This requires a high level of competence and commitment to lead staff members through the problem solving and planning process (Duke, 2014, p. 81-82). The FTLP also places emphasis on developing and training principals using "seven principles that include problem-based learning, situated learning, data-based problem solving, team based assignments and activities, coaching and continuous feedback, sequenced learning, and instructors who are role models" (Duke, 2014, p. 83). These seven principles are used to support the delivery of the entire FTLP training program (Duke, 2014).

Teacher Perception

Perceptions of change in low-performing schools are held differently by principals and teachers. Tucker, Higgins, and Salmonowicz (2010) completed a study of ten low-achieving schools in Virginia and found there were noted disparities between how principals and teachers rated areas of improvement that it impacted student achievement. Principals and teachers tend to agree on the effectiveness of new textbooks, increased learning time, and interventions. However, principals rated improvements in professional development, working relationships and student

groupings at higher levels than teachers. In a similar study Duke et al. (2011) found teachers are inclined not to identify change that is directly linked to their own practices and routines.

The difference in perception between principals and teachers about change is a significant issue in education as school improvement models frequently place emphasis on principal leadership as being a key element to changing a school (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Leithwood et al. (2004) indicated "leadership in a school is second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 3). Principals leading in persistently lowest-achieving schools need to initiate bold changes to increase student achievement and also need teacher buy-in to implement the changes with fidelity. The task of increasing student achievement, making improvements and turning a school around is difficult, but it the difficulty increases when principals and teacher have different perceptions about what contributes to school failure (Duke et al., 2011).

Selected Measurements

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (2007) were used to measure the variable outcome of principal leadership. The MLQ assesses leadership and classifies the leadership descriptors as passive/avoidant, transactional, or transformational and also assesses the level of outcome associated with principal leadership. The MLQ has been used in a variety of

settings for different purposes. It has been used in over 300 research studies and dissertations (Avoilo & Bass, 2007). Butler (2012) used the MLQ in his dissertation study that included a similar research question evaluating the relationship of leadership and school climate. In a study about teacher job satisfaction, Bogler (2005) used the MLQ to assess principal leadership.

The MLQ user manual included various options to complete the survey that do not interfere with the validity or reliability of the survey. There are options for conducting the survey including: 1) a person in a leadership position to rate their own leadership traits, 2) have other people who work with the leader complete the survey rating the leadership traits, or 3) have both the leader and others rate the leadership traits. An email was sent to Mind Garden, Inc. the publisher of the MLQ, clarifying the intent only to survey teachers in this study. The publisher confirmed this was an acceptable and normal use of the MLQ.

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ RS) was developed by Haplin and Croft (1962) to assess the staff interactions found in secondary schools. The scale has been adjusted and revised for secondary schools. The secondary revision has been used for over 20 years in numerous studies. Researchers such as Baughman (1996), Lord (2001), and Robinson (2010) have used the OCDQ RS to measure school climate. Additionally, Robinson (2010) used the OCDQ RS to measure school climate and the MLQ to measure principal leadership style in the same study. Dr. Wayne Hoy, Fawcett Professor Emeritus of the

Educational Administration Department, at the University of Ohio, completed a study of both the OCDQ RS and OCDQ RE and published the results in his book Open Schools Healthy Schools.

The OCDQ RS was developed specifically for secondary schools, which is inclusive of middle schools. However, there is a version of the OCDQ referred to as the OCDQ RM that was designed specifically for middle schools. The OCDQ RM is 15 questions longer than the OCDQ RS and has some questions that are the same. The validity and reliability of the two instruments are similar. A pilot survey was conducted of both the OCDQ RS and the OCDR MS using teachers at a PLA middle school in Iowa that was not selected for participation in the study. The school was only identified as PLA for two years rather than three. Each of the 12 teachers invited to participate in the pilot survey completed the survey and also gave feedback in the form of email or by participating in a focus group.

The teachers included in the pilot had a minimum of five years of teaching experience as a middle school teacher. At least three of the teachers had 15 or more years of teaching experience at the middle school level. The teachers were asked which instrument they preferred, the reasons for their preference, and how long it took them to complete both surveys. Participants in the focus group were also asked what would motivate them to complete the survey if they did not have any familiarity with the researcher and if the questions were appropriate for the middle school level. The teachers responded well to both survey sets of questions. Only one teacher accurately indicated which survey was designed for middle school teachers. One

teacher complained the vocabulary was too difficult to understand. The other teachers who participated in the focus group disagreed the vocabulary was too difficult. A different teacher complained the wording in the surveys was too negative. However, most suggested the questions were appropriate. Most of the teachers completed both surveys in less than 10 minutes total. When teachers were asked to select either the OCDQ RS or the OCDQ MS to be paired with a 45 question survey on principal leadership they selected the OCDQ RS. The results of the pilot study suggested there was limited substantive difference between the OCDQ RS and the OCDQ MS from a middle school teacher's perspective. Due to copyright restrictions, the MLQ was not included in the pilot.

The middle school teachers included in the pilot study focus group had difficulty accurately determining which the surveys were designed specifically for middle school and suggested both were appropriate. The OCDQ RS has been used by many researchers over a vast number of years. The validity and reliability of the measure are strong enough to consider the OCDQ RS as an appropriate option to measure school climate. The design is simplistic and easy to administer. The history, validity and reliability of both the MLQ and the OCDQ RS, make these measures an appropriate choice for this particular study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Procedures and Research Design of the Dissertation

The proposed study used a quantitative method to explore the relationship between principal leadership and school climate as perceived by teachers in PLA middle schools settings. PLA schools were identified using Iowa's persistently lowest-achieving schools list and student achievement data for the selected years (2009-2010 through 2013-2014) which was published on the Iowa Department of Education website.

Research Method and Design

A correlation study was designed to explore the relationship between the independent variable (principal leadership) and the dependent variable (school climate). The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship and compute the correlation. The design was appropriate as correlation studies are intended to be used to explore, understand, and also inform the development of a theory about the relationship between a set of variables (Patten, 2014; Vogt, 2007).

Data from both the MLQ and the OCDQ RS were analyzed using ANOVA to conduct a two-way analysis of variance and linear regression using the SPSS software. ANOVA was used to identify when there was a significant difference

between the mean score of the variable between various groups (Mujis, 2011; Vogt, 2007). Vogt (2007) recommended researchers determine whether or not the relationship is linear because Pearson r does not measure other kinds of relationships accurately (p. 32).

Research Questions

Primary research questions.

RQ 1. What, if any, relationship exists between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA school settings as perceived by teachers?

RQ 2. What, if any, differences exist in school climate in PLA schools based on teacher years of experience, gender and content area?

Hypotheses.

*H1*o*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA schools as perceived by teachers.

*H1*a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA schools as perceived by teachers.

*H2*o*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions school climate in PLA schools based on years of experience.

*H2*a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on years of experience.

*H3*o*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on gender.

*H3*a*:* There is a statistically significant difference between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on gender.

*H4*o*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on content area.

*H4*a*:* There is a statistically significant difference between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on content area.

Some studies of a similar nature might also include the ethnicity of the teacher as a variable; however, this variable was intentionally omitted from the study due to limited variance in demographics of the teaching pool statewide.

Sample

Roberts (2004) cautioned researchers to have a comprehensive understanding of the total size of the population prior to determining the sample size and to also ensure the size of the sample population selected is large enough to produce reliable data. The sample size was noted in the planning process.

A total of 78 schools have been identified as PLA since 2010-2011. There were 42 schools identified in 2013-2014, 41 schools identified in 2011-2012, and 35 schools identified 2010-2011. The Iowa Department of Education did not publish or identify any schools as PLA in 2012-2013. There is not an explanation as to why schools were not identified in 2012-2013 on the Iowa Department of Education's website. Some schools have been identified each of the three years the list was generated and published.

This study only included middle schools due to the large number of middle schools identified as PLA. There are 28 middle schools that have been identified at least once as a PLA school, while seven middle schools that have been identified each of the three years the list was published. Only middle schools with poverty rates that met or exceeded 40% of the student population and minority student populations that met or exceeded 30% of the student population were used for this study. The decision to use schools with poverty rates that met or exceeded 40% of the student population is consistent with the Federal Title I guidelines to allow schools to use Title I funds school-wide. Additionally, the mean percent of minority students who attend PLA identified schools in Iowa is 36%. The rationale for including schools with minority student populations that met or exceeded 30% is that it allowed one additional school to be included in the study and increased the overall sample size. There were seven middle schools in Iowa that met the established criteria to be included in the study.

There were 288 potential teacher participants for this study at the seven identified schools. All teachers at the PLA schools were invited to participate in the study. It was necessary to have 185 respondents to achieve a 95% confidence level and a plus or minus 5% confidence interval.

Middle school teachers from the focus group that participated in the pilot study of the OCDQ RS and OCDQ RM surveys suggested most teachers would take the survey based on the subject matter. The teachers in the pilot group suggested teachers would be inclined to respond to a survey asking about teacher's perceptions

of principal leadership. However, they also agreed that a small token such as a dollar bill or small gift certificate would provide motivation for teachers to complete the survey. This is consistent with research (Rose, Sidle, & Griffith, 2007) on survey response rates that suggests response rates tend to increase with the use of monetary and non-monetary rewards.

Table 3.0 lists all seven schools identified for this study. The school name has been replaced with a code. The table also includes the number of years the school has been identified as PLA, the total enrollment, the percent of students qualifying for free and or reduced lunch (FRL), the percent of minority students, and number of teachers at each school.

Table 3.0

Schools Identified for the Study

School Code	Number of Years Identified as PLA	Enrollment	Percent FRL	Percent Minority	Number of Teachers
A	3	599	67.6%	38.9%	45
B	3	488	85.2%	43.2%	43
C	3	657	73.7%	49.9%	45
D	3	715	76.4%	68.7%	40
E	3	633	82.5%	67.0%	50
F	3	410	64.1%	32.0%	42
G	3	504	82.3%	60.9%	39

Setting

The setting for this study was Iowa middle schools that have been identified as PLA Tier I or Tier II for at least three years with poverty rates that met or exceeded 40% of the student population and minority student populations that met or exceeded 30% of the student population. There were seven schools that met the established criteria.

All data collected about the schools was a matter of public record and was available from the Iowa Department of Education's website or local school district's websites.

Instrumentation of Measures

The study evaluated the relationship between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in turnaround school settings as perceived by teachers. The MLQ developed by Bass and Avolio (2007) was used to measure the outcome of principal leadership. The MLQ assesses leadership and classifies the leadership descriptors as passive/avoidant, transactional, or transformational. Participants respond by rating 45 leadership descriptors on a scale of zero (not at all) to four (frequently if not always). The survey could be completed in approximately 15 minutes.

The MLQ has been used in a variety of settings for different purposes. It has been used in over 300 research studies and dissertations (Avoilo & Bass, 2007).

Butler (2012) used the MLQ in his dissertation study that included a similar research question evaluating the relationship of leadership and school climate. In a study about teacher job satisfaction Bogler (2005) used the MLQ to assess principal leadership. Bass and Avoilo (2007) also examined the reliability of the MLQ. The coefficient alpha scores ranged from .74 to .94. These coefficient alpha scores suggest a high degree of correlation as a coefficient alpha score of 1.0 would indicate a perfect positive correlation where as a coefficient alpha score of -1.0 would indicate a negative correlation. A coefficient alpha score of zero would suggest there is no correlation (Patten, 2014). A coefficient alpha score above .7 is generally considered to have reasonable reliability (Mujis, 2011). The MLQ is published by Mind Garden, Inc. and is available for purchase. The copyright notice prohibits the complete reproduction of the instrument in dissertations or published documents.

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ RS) was developed by Haplin and Croft (1962) to assess the staff interactions found in secondary schools. The questionnaire included 34 items (Hoy, 2004). Respondents selected a rating from a Likert scale that has four descriptors. The descriptors included rarely, sometimes, often, or very frequently. The scale was adjusted for secondary schools and has been used for over 20 years in numerous studies, and also has strong validity. Researchers such as Baughman (1996), Lord (2001), and Robinson (2010) have used the OCDQ RS to measure school climate. Additionally, Robinson (2010) used the OCDQ RS to measure school climate and the MLQ to measure principal leadership style in same study. Hoy (2004) conducted reliability

testing on each of the dimensions included in the scale. The reliability scores for each of the dimensions ranged from .94 to .81 (Hoy, 2004). These reliability scores also suggested a high degree of correlation as a coefficient alpha score of 1.0 would indicate there was a direct correlation, and a coefficient alpha score of -1.0 would indicate there was a negative correlation. The scales were simple and inexpensive to administer.

The validity and reliability of the measure are strong enough to consider both assessments as appropriate options to measure the stated variables. In addition, both the MLQ and OCDQ-RS have been used by many researchers over a vast number of years.

The variable of outcome of leadership was measured by the MLQ instrument which consisted of questions 14, 21, 26, 27, and 37 through 45 on the survey instrument. The variable school climate was measured by the OCDQ RS, which included questions one through 35 on the survey instrument. Years of experience was be measured by question one, section A on the survey instrument. Gender was be measured by question two, section A on the survey instrument.

A list of all questions from the OCDQ RS and basic data collection questions are listed in Appendix A. The MLQ is not included due to copyright restrictions.

Table 3.1 includes a listing of each of the variables included in the study and also lists how they are aligned with each of the test number items.

Table 3.1

Alignment of Test Instruments with Variables and Test Number Items

Test	Variable	Climate Factor or Leadership Type	Characteristic	Related Test Items
OCDQ RS	School Climate	Frustrated	Frustrated	1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 22
OCDQ RS	School Climate	Engaged	Engaged	3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 28, 33, 34
OCDQ RS	School Climate	Supportive	Supportive	5, 6, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30
OCDQ RS	School Climate	Directive	Directive	7, 12, 13, 18, 19, 31, 32
OCDQ RS	School Climate	Intimate	Intimate	14, 21, 26, 27
MLQ	Leadership	Outcomes of Leadership	Effectiveness	37, 40, 43, 45
MLQ	Leadership	Outcomes of Leadership	Extra Effort	39, 42, 44
MLQ	Leadership	Outcomes of Leadership	Satisfaction	38, 41
MLQ	Leadership	Passive Avoidant	Laissez-Faire	5, 7, 28, 33
MLQ	Leadership	Passive Avoidant	Mgmt by Exception Passive	3, 12, 17, 20
MLQ	Leadership	Transactional	Contingent Reward	1, 11, 16, 35
MLQ	Leadership	Transactional	Mgmt by Exception Active	4, 22, 24, 27
MLQ	Leadership	Transformational	Idealized Attributes or Idealized Influence Attributes	10, 18, 21, 25
MLQ	Leadership	Transformational	Idealized Behaviors or Idealized Influence Behaviors	6, 14, 23, 34
MLQ	Leadership	Transformational	Individualized Consideration	15, 19, 29, 31
MLQ	Leadership	Transformational	Inspirational Motivation	9, 13, 26, 36
MLQ	Leadership	Transformational	Intellectual Stimulation	2, 8, 30, 32
S-A	Gender		Male, Female	A-1
S-A	Years of Experience		0-1 year 2- 5 years 6-10 years More than 10 years	A-2
S-A	Content Area			A-3

Data Collection

This study included Iowa middle schools that have been identified as PLA Tier I or Tier II for at least three years with poverty rates that met or exceeded 40% of the student population and minority student populations that met or exceeded 30% of the student population. This data was a matter of public record and was accessible through the Iowa Department of Education's website.

The actual survey data was collected by Mind Garden Inc. Mind Garden, Inc. developed one link for the survey questions from both the MLQ and the OCDQ RS. This link was included in the body of an email that was sent to the teachers. Using an electronic instrument streamlined the process of collecting perception data in a controlled format. It allowed for a large volume of information to be collected, organized and analyzed. It was more likely to have an increased response rate in a reasonable timeline using an electronic format rather than mailed survey.

Email addresses of teachers in identified middle schools were collected using the directories published on each of the school sites. The lists were confirmed with each of the school sites prior to use. An introductory email was sent to all teachers in the identified middle schools explaining the purpose of the study and inviting them to participate in the surveys. A short YouTube video (http://youtu.be/szgNGvh6tTM) was also included with this introductory email. The video included information about the importance and purpose of the study. The link to the survey site was embedded in the body of the email. In one district the central office administration sent the initial

email and follow up email directly to teachers in the schools that were identified for the study. The principals at each of the participating schools discussed the study at their own staff meetings and suggested it was not necessary for the researcher to attend. Teacher leaders from the Iowa State Education Association also encouraged teachers to participate in the study.

A flyer was mailed to teachers at the schools to remind them to complete the survey approximately two weeks after the first email was sent. The flyer included a reminder that a donation of $5.00 would be made to Iowa Kids Net for every teacher than completed the survey (up to $1000.00). The flyer was mailed in a white envelope that was hand addressed. The flyer was mailed directly to the teacher's school. A follow-up email was sent reminding teachers they were invited to participate in the study. The link to the survey site was embedded in the body of the follow-up email.

A similar introductory email and video was sent to district superintendent of the identified schools to ask permission to conduct the study at the various school sites.

Data collection was carefully monitored to ensure there would be a response rate that was large enough to produce reliable data. There were 180 potential teacher participants for this study at the four schools that voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and all teachers at the PLA schools were invited to participate in the study. It was necessary to have 123 respondents to achieve a 95% confidence level and a plus or minus 5% confidence interval.

After the survey was completed, the data from the MLQ and OCDQ RS was downloaded from the Mind Garden, Inc. website. The data from both surveys was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The independent variable data from the MLQ and dependent variable data from the OCDQ RS and other independent variables (years of teacher experience, gender and content area) were entered into the SPSS software for data analysis. Data from both the MLQ and the OCDQ RS was analyzed using two-way analysis of variance and linear regression using the SPSS. Dr. Joel Fredrickson from Bethel University was contracted to assist with data analysis.

Limitations and Delimitations

The scope of the sample was limited to persistently lowest-achieving middle schools in Iowa with high levels of poverty (greater than 40%) and minority student populations that exceed 30%. Using this criterion limited the number of schools to include in the study. The study was also limited as the majority of identified schools are relatively small in size in comparison to schools across the United States.

Three of the seven schools were eliminated from the study due to either central office or principal resistance to the use of the survey in the school. All of the teachers who participated in the study were from schools that had voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and had principals that were open to the research topic and actively encouraged their staff to participate. It is not possible to accurately determine what the results of the study might have been had the schools that denied permission

for the study actually participated. Consequently, the results of the study are difficult to generalize. The sample size is small and there is potential bias in studying only the schools that willingly participated.

The data collected was completely based on teacher's perception or opinion of principal leadership and school climate. Perceptions and opinions can be influenced by both positive and negative experiences within the school environment. Perception is truth to the participant, but may or may not be a completely accurate reflection of the principal's leadership or school climate.

The survey was delivered electronically, and some staff may not have had the technology skills to complete an online survey. Mind Garden, Inc. software was used to collect the survey data. The general set up was simple to follow, and novice technology users should not have had difficulty navigating the system. Teachers in the pilot study did not express concerns about the use of an electronic survey rather than paper. Rose et al. (2007) found the use of electronic surveys had similar if not better results than traditional mailed surveys.

Ethical Considerations

The Belmont Report identifies the respect for persons as an overriding principle. There is a stigma attached to any school identified as a PLA school, and as a result, there was some resistance from administrators who did not want to have their teachers to participate in the study. These schools were dropped from the study. Principals and teachers may have had concerns that they would be identifiable in the study. It was important to demonstrate how participants were protected from

exposure and minimize risk to their professional reputation or employment for being forthright with their responses. Precautions were taken to ensure all participation was voluntary and all data remained confidential. While teachers were encouraged, no one was required to participate in the study. While the names of schools and staff associated are a matter of public record, names of the schools included in the study were coded as an additional measure of confidentiality.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the study of teacher perception of principal leadership and school climate in persistently lowest-achieving middle schools in Iowa. There are two parts to this chapter. The initial section focuses on the sampling and data collected. The subsequent section includes the statistical analysis for each of the questions and hypotheses. Tables and figures are included in the chapter to present statistical patterns found in the data.

Data Collection

This study included Iowa middle schools that have been identified as PLA Tier I or Tier II for at least three years with poverty rates that met or exceeded 40% of the student population and minority student populations that met or exceeded 30% of the student population. A total of seven schools met the established criteria and were invited to participate in the study. Four schools agreed to participate in the study. The remaining three schools were eliminated from the study as the administration denied permission for their staff to participate in the study. There were 180 potential teacher participants at the four schools that agreed to participate in the study. There were 61 teachers who completed the survey resulting in a 33.8% response rate. A higher response rate for the survey was desirable. Baruch and Holtom (2008) discussed how response rates have changed over time and participants are reluctant to

participate in surveys. They contributed lower response rates to several factors but specifically suggest survey saturation is problematic and also being too busy to respond are possible reasons people do not respond to surveys.

Some teachers may have been reluctant to respond as there is a stigma attached to working in a PLA school, but precautions were taken to protect the identity of the teachers who took the survey. Principals at three of the schools expressed a concern that teachers may have been reluctant to take a survey at the end of a grading term when they were busy grading late assignments and entering grades into the student information system.

There were 17 (27.9%) male participants and 43 (70.5%) female participants who responded to the survey. More females responded to the survey than males. However, the response rate for males was 31.4 % which is similar to the overall response rate for the survey (33.8%). One participant did not respond to the question related to gender. Table 4.0 displays the frequency and percent of the participants by gender.

Table 4.0

Frequency and Percent of the Participants by Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	17	27.9
	Female	43	70.5
	Total	60	98.4
Missing	System	1	1.6
Total		61	100.0

The majority of the participants that responded to the survey had more than ten years of teaching experience. There were 32 (52.5 %) of the participants had more than ten years of experience, and 12 (19.7%) of the participants that had between six to ten years of experience. A total of 14 (23%) of the participants had two to five years of teaching experience. Only two (3.3%) of the participants had one or fewer years of experience. One participant did not respond to the question related to years of teaching experience. Table 4.1 displays the frequency and percent of years of experience for the participants.

Table 4.1

Number of Years of Teaching Experience

		Frequency	Percent
Years	0-1	2	3.3
	2-5	14	23.0
	6-10	12	19.7
	> 10	32	52.5
	Total	60	98.4
Missing	System	1	1.6
Total		61	100.0

The majority (55%) of the teachers responded they teach in core content areas. There were 19 (31.1%) of the participants teaching in core instruction (Math, Reading, English or Language Arts) that is tested on the Iowa Assessments, which are used to determine the PLA designation in the state. An additional 14 (23%) of the participants responded they taught in core instruction (Science or Social Studies) that is not tested for this purpose. There were 15 (24.6 %) participants that responded

they taught in support teaching roles (Special Education, English Language Learners, Title I, or Talented and Gifted), and 12 (19.7%) additionally participants who taught exploratory or elective courses (Physical Education, Art, Music, World Languages, or other areas). Table 4.2 includes the frequency and percent of the content areas participants are assigned to teach.

Table 4.2

Content Area Assignment of Participants

		Frequency	Percent
Content Area	Tested Core Instruction	19	31.1
	Non Tested Core Instruction	14	23.0
	Support Teacher	15	24.6
	Exploratory or Elective	12	19.7
	Total	60	98.4
Missing	System	1	1.6
Total		61	100.0

Research Questions

RQ 1. What, if any, relationship exists between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA school settings as perceived by teachers? Table 4.3 displays the Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the outcome of principal leadership as defined by the MLQ and school climate as defined by the OCDQ-RS.

Statistically significant results are marked with the symbol * at the .05 level and ** at the .01 level. All significant results are shaded in the chart.

Table 4.3

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the Outcome of Principal Leadership as Defined by the MLQ and School Climate as Defined by the OCDQ-RS

		Supportive Behavior	Directive Behavior	Engaged Behavior	Frustrated Behavior	Intimate Behavior	Effectiveness	Extra Effort	Satisfaction with the leadership
Supportive Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.161	.608**	-.500**	.338*	.880**	.793**	.885**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.235	0	0	0.012	0	0	0
	N	56	56	55	55	55	42	53	56
Directive Behavior	Pearson Correlation	-0.161	1	0.206	.332*	-0.091	-0.281	0.032	-0.195
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.235		0.125	0.012	0.5	0.065	0.819	0.143
	N	56	58	57	57	57	44	55	58
Engaged Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.608**	0.206	1	-.392**	.388**	.392**	.419**	.496**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.125		0.003	0.003	0.008	0.001	0
	N	55	57	58	57	58	44	55	58
Frustrated Behavior	Pearson Correlation	-.500**	.332*	-.392**	1	-0.179	-.390**	-.338*	-.470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.012	0.003		0.182	0.009	0.011	0
	N	55	57	57	58	57	44	56	58
Intimate Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.338*	-0.091	.388**	-0.179	1	0.152	.341*	0.223
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	0.5	0.003	0.182		0.324	0.011	0.093
	N	55	57	58	57	58	44	55	58

Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.880**	-0.281	.392**	-.390**	0.152	1	.819**	.935**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.065	0.008	0.009	0.324		0	0
	N	42	44	44	44	44	45	44	45
Extra Effort	Pearson Correlation	.793**	-0.032	.419**	-.338*	.341*	.819**	1	.828**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.819	0.001	0.011	0.011	0		0
	N	53	55	55	56	55	44	56	56
Satisfaction with the leadership	Pearson Correlation	.885**	-0.195	.496**	-.470**	0.223	.935**	.828**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.143	0	0	0.093	0	0	
	N	56	58	58	58	58	45	56	59

Statistically significant results are marked with the symbol * at the .05 level and ** at the .01 level. All significant results are shaded in the chart.

Table 4.4 includes the results from ANOVA for the dependent variable satisfaction with leadership and predicators of school climate.

Table 4.4

Satisfaction with Leadership and Predicators of School Climate using ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.861	5	8.572	36.864	.000[b]
	Residual	11.162	48	.233		
	Total	54.023	53			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with the leadership

b. Predictors: (Constant), Intimate Behavior , Directive Behavior, Frustrated Behavior, Supportive Behavior, Engaged Behavior

Table 4.5 includes the correlation coefficients for the dependent variable satisfaction with leadership and predicators of school climate.

Table 4.5

Correlation Coefficients of Satisfaction with Leadership and Predicators of School Climate

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.256	.692		-.369	.713
	Supportive Behavior	.188	.019	.881	9.664	.000
	Directive Behavior	-.016	.020	-.065	-.820	.416
	Engaged Behavior	-.001	.023	-.004	-.039	.969
	Frustrated Behavior	-.015	.025	-.048	-.573	.569
	Intimate Behavior	-.036	.033	-.081	-1.082	.285

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with the leadership

Table 4.6 includes the results from ANOVA for the dependent variable effectiveness with leadership and predicators of school climate.

Table 4.6

Effectiveness and Predicators of School Climate using ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.547	5	4.509	27.220	.000[b]
	Residual	5.633	34	.166		
	Total	28.180	39			

a. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Intimate Behavior , Frustrated Behavior, Engaged Behavior, Supportive Behavior, Directive Behavior

Table 4.7 includes the correlation coefficients of the dependent variable effectiveness and the predicators of school climate.

Table 4.7

Correlation Coefficients of Effectiveness and Predicators of School Climate

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.078	.737		.106	.916
	Supportive Behavior	.178	.019	.971	9.490	.000
	Directive Behavior	.001	.021	.004	.042	.967
	Engaged Behavior	-.022	.023	-.104	-.985	.332
	Frustrated Behavior	.001	.027	.002	.019	.985
	Intimate Behavior	-.029	.031	-.078	-.922	.363

a. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness

Table 4.8 includes the results from ANOVA for the dependent variable extra effort with leadership and predicators of school climate.

Table 4.8

Extra Effort and Predicators of School Climate using ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.750	5	8.550	17.495	.000[b]
	Residual	22.480	46	.489		
	Total	65.231	51			

a. Dependent Variable: Extra Effort

b. Predictors: (Constant), Intimate Behavior , Directive Behavior, Frustrated Behavior, Supportive Behavior, Engaged Behavior

Table 4.9 includes the correlation coefficients of the dependent variable extra effort and the predicators of school climate.

Table 4.9

Correlation Coefficients of Extra Effort and Predicators of School Climate

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.817	1.047		-1.735	.089
Supportive Behavior	.204	.028	.870	7.194	.000
Directive Behavior	.038	.030	.137	1.298	.201
Engaged Behavior	-.043	.034	-.169	-1.284	.206
Frustrated Behavior	-.002	.038	-.006	-.054	.957
Intimate Behavior	.064	.051	.124	1.271	.210

a. Dependent Variable: Extra Effort

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the independent variable (principal leadership) and the dependent variable (school climate) and compute the correlation coefficient. The MLQ categories, related to the outcome of principal leadership, included effectiveness, extra effort, and satisfaction. Frustrated, engaged, supportive, directive and intimate are categories from the OCDQ-RS to define school climate.

There is a significant correlation between supportive behavior and teacher perception of principal effectiveness (.880); supportive behavior and teacher perception of extra effort (.793); and supportive behavior and teacher perception of satisfaction with leadership (.885). There is also a significant correlation between

teacher perception of supportive behavior and other areas of school climate. The correlation between supportive behavior and engaged behavior is .608, which is significant. However, there is also a significant negative correlation of -.500 between supportive behavior and frustrated behavior. Teacher perception of supportive behavior is significantly correlated with intimate school climate (.338).

Principals who exhibit supportive behavior take measures to motivate teachers through feedback, model expectations, and lead by example. Additionally, they find ways to assist and be helpful. They also develop strong professional and personal relationships with their staff by demonstrating authentic interest and concern for their welfare. Principals who demonstrate support behavior take an interest in the social and professional achievements of their staff (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). Strong professional relationships are required in order for the change process to be successful. Fullan (2001) found the

> "single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better. If they remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus, leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups---especially with people different than themselves" (p. 5).

There was not a significant correlation between teacher perception of directive behavior and any area of the outcome of principal leadership, but it is noted there is a significant positive correlation of .332 between directive behavior and frustrated behavior that are specific areas of school climate. Principals who exhibit directive

behavior lack general flexibility in their management style and are controlling of all aspects of the school environment (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). As a result, frustrated behaviors manifest from both administration and colleagues that distract from the central purpose of teaching in learning in schools. Assigned tasks and non-teaching duties begin to interfere with the real work. Staff become irritating, annoying and frequently interrupt each other rather than engaging in strong productive discussion and learning communities (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). There is an urgency factor for principals and staff who are assigned to lead PLA schools. School leaders who fail to take action to make improvement in the school results are confronted with extreme consequences. It would not be uncommon for administration to respond by engaging in directive behaviors such as tightening expectations, procedures and routines to demonstrate rapid improvement; however, Fullan (2006) cautioned readers that "command-and-control strategies" often do achieve the expected result but do not result in systematic long term change (p. 37) .

Teacher perception of engaged behavior has a significant correlation with the outcome of principal leadership in the areas of effectiveness (.392), extra effort (.793), and satisfaction with leadership (.885). As previously stated there is a significant positive relationship between teacher perception of engagement and supportive behavior (.608), and also a negative correlation between engagement and frustrated behavior (-.392). Additionally the correlation between teacher perception of engagement and intimate behavior is significant. The coefficient is .338.

Engaged behavior is evidenced by high levels of staff morale and pride in the learning community. Staff develop strong personal and professional relationships and are supportive each other. Teachers demonstrate their commitment to students' success and also develop positive relationships with their students. The learning community is generally optimistic that students have potential and are able to learn (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991).

There was a negative correlation between teacher perception of frustrated behavior and the outcome of principal leadership in the areas of effectiveness (-.390), extra effort (-.338), and satisfaction with leadership (.-470). It should be noted that the only area of school climate that frustrated behavior had a positive correlation with was directive behavior (.332). When frustrated behaviors are evident in both administration and teachers the relationship has deteriorated the point that staff become irritating, annoying and frequently interrupt each other rather than engage in strong productive discussion and learning communities (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). Teachers no longer perceive their principal is effective meeting student or staff needs, representing staff interests, fulfilling general requirements or facilitating groups or meetings (Avoilo & Bass, 2007). There is a general sense of dissatisfaction with principal leadership and staff willingness to extend extra effort to do more than what is required or have a desire for others to succeed is diminished (Avoilo & Bass, 2007, p. 105).

Teacher perception of intimate school climate had a significant positive correlation with only one area - the outcome of principal leadership, which was extra

effort (.341). Intimate behavior was significantly correlated to other areas of school climate including supportive behavior (.338) and engaged behavior (.388). Intimate school climate is the interconnected social relationships among the school staff. Teachers are familiar with each other and develop relationships on a personal level. It is not uncommon for teachers to socialize and spend time outside of school together when there is an intimate school climate (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991).

Hypotheses

Null hypothesis H1o states: There is not a statistically significant relationship between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA schools as perceived by teachers. However there was a statistically significant positive relationship between two of the areas of positive school climate (supportive behavior, engaged behavior) and all three areas of the outcome of principal leadership. There was also a statistically significant positive relationship between school climate (intimate behavior) and extra effort which is associated with the outcome of principal leadership. There was a statistically significant negative relationship between negative school climate (frustrated behavior) and the outcome of principal leadership. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is to accept the alternative hypothesis H1a: There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA schools as perceived by teachers.

RQ 2. What, if any, differences exist in school climate in PLA schools based on teacher years of experience, gender and content area?

There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on teacher years of experience, gender or content area. Table 4.11 displays the number, mean and standard deviation between teacher perception of school climate and the outcome of principal leadership.

Table 4.10

School Climate Behaviors and Years of Teacher Experience (Mean and Standard Deviation)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Supportive Behavior	0-5 years	16	21.00	4.336	1.084	18.69	23.31	9	27
	6-10 Years	11	22.18	5.564	1.678	18.44	25.92	9	28
	More than 10 years	29	22.76	4.634	.861	21.00	24.52	9	28
	Total	56	22.14	4.719	.631	20.88	23.41	9	28
Directive Behavior	0-5 years	16	13.69	3.962	.990	11.58	15.80	7	23
	6-10 Years	12	13.50	3.119	.900	11.52	15.48	8	19
	More than 10 years	30	14.03	4.230	.772	12.45	15.61	8	24
	Total	58	13.83	3.894	.511	12.80	14.85	7	24
Engaged Behavior	0-5 years	16	26.88	4.064	1.016	24.71	29.04	19	31
	6-10 Years	11	26.82	5.154	1.554	23.36	30.28	19	37
	More than 10 years	31	28.03	4.262	.765	26.47	29.60	18	37
	Total	58	27.48	4.350	.571	26.34	28.63	18	37
Frustrated Behavior	0-5 years	16	13.94	3.108	.777	12.28	15.59	10	20
	6-10 Years	12	12.17	2.368	.683	10.66	13.67	8	15
	More than 10 years	30	13.37	3.586	.655	12.03	14.71	6	20
	Total	58	13.28	3.249	.427	12.42	14.13	6	20
Intimate Behavior	0-5 years	16	10.50	1.506	.376	9.70	11.30	9	14
	6-10 Years	11	10.18	2.523	.761	8.49	11.88	6	14
	More than 10 years	31	10.13	2.487	.447	9.22	11.04	5	16
	Total	58	10.24	2.235	.293	9.65	10.83	5	16

Effectiveness	0-5 years	11	2.809	.7120	.2147	2.331	3.287	1.5	4.0
	6-10 Years	9	3.311	1.1439	.3813	2.432	4.190	.5	4.0
	More than 10 years	25	3.420	.7141	.1428	3.125	3.715	1.5	4.0
	Total	45	3.249	.8349	.1245	2.998	3.500	.5	4.0
Extra Effort	0-5 years	16	2.581	1.1432	.2858	1.972	3.190	.7	4.0
	6-10 Years	12	2.750	1.3208	.3813	1.911	3.589	.0	4.0
	More than 10 years	28	2.829	1.0509	.1986	2.421	3.236	.3	4.0
	Total	56	2.741	1.1220	.1499	2.441	3.042	.0	4.0
Satisfaction with the leadership	0-5 years	16	2.906	.8985	.2246	2.427	3.385	1.5	4.0
	6-10 Years	12	3.042	1.1172	.3225	2.332	3.751	.0	4.0
	More than 10 years	31	3.274	.9903	.1779	2.911	3.637	.5	4.0
	Total	59	3.127	.9896	.1288	2.869	3.385	.0	4.0

*H2*o*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on years of experience.

There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on teacher years of experience. The determination is to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

*H2*a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on years of experience.

There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on teacher years of experience. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Table 4.11 displays the number, mean and standard deviation between gender and teacher perception of areas of school climate and the outcome of principal leadership.

Table 4.11

School Climate Behaviors, the Outcome of Principal Leadership, and Gender (Mean and Standard Deviation)

	Gender: (1=Male, 2=Female)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Supportive Behavior	Male	17	22.65	4.554	1.105
	Female	39	21.92	4.831	.774
Directive Behavior	Male	17	14.18	3.925	.952
	Female	41	13.68	3.921	.612
Engaged Behavior	Male	17	27.35	3.278	.795
	Female	41	27.54	4.760	.743
Frustrated Behavior	Male	17	13.29	3.118	.756
	Female	41	13.27	3.339	.522
Intimate Behavior	Male	17	9.53	2.552	.619
	Female	41	10.54	2.051	.320
Satisfaction with the leadership	Male	17	3.088	1.0493	.2545
	Female	42	3.143	.9771	.1508
Effectiveness	Male	13	3.115	1.0073	.2794
	Female	32	3.303	.7656	.1353
Extra Effort	Male	16	2.725	1.1693	.2923
	Female	40	2.748	1.1177	.1767

*H3*o*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on gender.

There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on gender. As a result, the conclusion is to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

*H3*a*:* There is a statistically significant difference between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on gender.

There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on gender. The alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4.12 displays the number, mean and standard deviation between teacher's perception of areas of school climate, the outcome of principal leadership, and content area.

Table 4.12

School Climate Behaviors, the Outcome of Principal Leadership, and Content Area (Mean and Standard Deviation)

Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Supportive Behavior	Tested Core	19	23.26	4.175	.958	21.25	25.28	14	28
	Non Tested Core	14	21.50	5.215	1.394	18.49	24.51	9	28
	Support	13	21.85	4.879	1.353	18.90	24.79	9	28
	Exploratory/Elective	10	21.30	5.100	1.613	17.65	24.95	9	28
	Total	56	22.14	4.719	.631	20.88	23.41	9	28
Directive Behavior	Tested Core	19	13.05	3.582	.822	11.33	14.78	8	24
	Non Tested Core	14	14.43	4.519	1.208	11.82	17.04	7	23
	Support	15	13.87	3.758	.970	11.79	15.95	7	22
	Exploratory/Elective	10	14.40	4.088	1.293	11.48	17.32	8	23
	Total	58	13.83	3.894	.511	12.80	14.85	7	24
Engaged Behavior	Tested Core	18	27.67	5.445	1.283	24.96	30.37	18	37
	Non Tested Core	14	27.21	3.766	1.006	25.04	29.39	19	33
	Support	15	26.47	3.907	1.009	24.30	28.63	19	32
	Exploratory/Elective	11	28.91	3.700	1.116	26.42	31.39	24	37
	Total	58	27.48	4.350	.571	26.34	28.63	18	37
Frustrated Behavior	Tested Core	18	12.67	2.870	.676	11.24	14.09	6	19
	Non Tested Core	14	13.71	3.384	.904	11.76	15.67	8	20
	Support	15	13.80	3.590	.927	11.81	15.79	8	20
	Exploratory/Elective	11	13.00	3.435	1.036	10.69	15.31	9	20
	Total	58	13.28	3.249	.427	12.42	14.13	6	20
Intimate Behavior	Tested Core	18	10.11	2.471	.582	8.88	11.34	5	14
	Non Tested Core	14	9.36	1.865	.498	8.28	10.43	6	12
	Support	15	11.67	2.160	.558	10.47	12.86	9	16
	Exploratory/Elective	11	9.64	1.567	.472	8.58	10.69	8	12
	Total	58	10.24	2.235	.293	9.65	10.83	5	16

Table 4.12 *Continued*

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Effectiveness	Tested Core	10	3.740	.6186	.1956	3.297	4.183	2.0	4.0
	Non Tested Core	14	3.000	1.0228	.2734	2.409	3.591	.5	4.0
	Support	11	3.200	.5762	.1737	2.813	3.587	2.3	4.0
	Exploratory/Elective	10	3.160	.8771	.2774	2.533	3.787	1.5	4.0
	Total	45	3.249	.8349	.1245	2.998	3.500	.5	4.0
Extra Effort	Tested Core	16	2.831	1.3255	.3314	2.125	3.538	.3	4.0
	Non Tested Core	14	2.779	1.0431	.2788	2.176	3.381	.0	4.0
	Support	15	2.733	1.0841	.2799	2.133	3.334	.7	4.0
	Exploratory/Elective	11	2.573	1.0873	.3278	1.842	3.303	.7	4.0
	Total	56	2.741	1.1220	.1499	2.441	3.042	.0	4.0
Satisfaction with the leadership	Tested Core	19	3.237	.9771	.2242	2.766	3.708	1.0	4.0
	Non Tested Core	14	2.929	1.1411	.3050	2.270	3.587	.0	4.0
	Support	15	3.067	.8423	.2175	2.600	3.533	1.5	4.0
	Exploratory/Elective	11	3.273	1.0808	.3259	2.547	3.999	.5	4.0
	Total	59	3.127	.9896	.1288	2.869	3.385	.0	4.0

*H4*o*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on content area.

There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on content area. As a result, the conclusion was to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

*H4*a*:* There is a statistically significant difference between teacher's perceptions of school climate in PLA schools based on content area.

There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on content area. Thus, the conclusion was to reject the alternative hypothesis.

Summary

There was a statistically significant positive relationship between two of the areas of positive school climate (supportive behavior, engaged behavior) and all three areas of the outcome of principal leadership. There was also a statistically significant positive relationship between school climate (intimate behavior) and extra effort which is associated with the outcome of principal leadership. There was a statistically significant negative relationship between negative school climate (frustrated behavior) and the outcome of principal leadership. There was also a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA schools as perceived by teachers.

Chapter Five: Results

This chapter discusses the findings, conclusions and implications of this study. The first section includes an overview of the methodology and details the findings of the study. The next section is followed by a discussion of the findings and related conclusions. The chapter concludes with the implications of the study and recommendations for further study.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA middle schools in Iowa as perceived by teachers. The study attempted to answer whether or not school climate in PLA middle schools in Iowa is viewed the same by all staff or if there are differences based on years of teacher experience, gender, and content area taught.

The study examined two research questions relevant to the outcome of principal leadership and the relationship between school climate as perceived by teachers.

RQ 1. What, if any, relationship exists between the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA school settings as perceived by teachers?

RQ 2. What, if any, differences exist in school climate in PLA schools based on teacher years of experience, gender, and content area?

Overview of Methodology

The study utilized a quantitative methodology to explore the relationship between principal leadership and school climate as perceived by teachers in PLA middle schools settings. PLA schools were identified using Iowa's persistently lowest-achieving schools list and student achievement data for the selected years (2009-2010 through 2013-2014) which was published on the Iowa Department of Education website.

A correlation study was designed to explore the relationship between the independent variable (outcome of principal leadership) and the dependent variable (school climate). The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship and compute the correlation coefficient. Teachers were asked to respond to questions from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), published by Mind Garden, Inc., and the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ–RS), developed by Haplin and Croft (1962). The MLQ categories related to the outcome of principal leadership included effectiveness, extra effort, and satisfaction. Frustrated, engaged, supportive, directive and intimate are categories from the OCDQ-RS to define school climate.

Data from both the MLQ and the OCDQ RS was analyzed using ANOVA to conduct a two-way analysis of variance and also linear regression using the SPSS software. ANOVA was used to identify when there was a significant difference between the mean score of the variable between various groups (Mujis, 2011; Vogt, 2007).

This study only included middle schools due to the large number of middle schools identified as PLA Schools. Only Tier I and Tier II middle schools with poverty rates that met or exceeded 40% of the student population and minority student populations that met or exceeded 30% of the student population were used for this study. Tier I and Tier II schools are PLA Schools that are eligible for Title I school improvement grants (SIG). The decision to use schools with poverty rates that met or exceeded 40% of the student population is consistent with the Federal Title I guidelines to allow schools to use Title I funds school-wide. Additionally, the mean percent of minority students who attend PLA identified schools in Iowa was 36%. The rationale for including schools with minority student populations that met or exceeded 30% is that it allowed one additional school to be included in the study and increased the overall sample size. There were seven middle schools in Iowa that met the established criteria to be included in the study. Three schools were eliminated from the study as the administration denied consent to participate in the study.

Eliminating three schools created a situation where all schools included in this study were strictly voluntary. The district level administration and school principal were fully aware of and supportive of the purpose of the study, and also actively encouraged staff to participate. They invited staff to participate in the survey, discussed participation in staff meetings, and sent reminders to the staff to participate. Teacher leaders who were members of the local teacher's associations also supported the survey and openly encouraged the staff to participate in email and conversation. While this is a quantitative study, the researcher's initial impression of school climate

and principal leadership was positive as they trusted their staff to participate. The actual results of the study validated this initial assumption. Denying permission to participate in the study is consistent with school climate where there is more directive and frustrated behavior. It is not possible to accurately determine what the results of the study might have been had the schools that denied permission for the study participated. Although, including the eliminated schools in the study would have added value and provided more generalizable results.

Major Findings

1. Teacher perception of school climates with supportive behavior and engaged behavior is strongly related to staff perception of principal effectiveness, willingness to extend extra effort, and satisfaction with leadership.
2. Teacher perception of school climate with intimate behavior is related to staff willingness to extend extra effort.
3. Teacher perception of principal ineffectiveness, unwillingness to extend extra effort, and dissatisfaction with leadership is strongly related to staff perception of school climate with frustrated behavior.
4. The outcome of principal leadership and school climate is viewed similarly by teachers regardless of their gender, experience or assigned content area.

Supportive Behavior and the Outcome of Principal Leadership

Teacher perception of supportive behavior considerably impacts the outcome of principal leadership. There is a significant correlation between supportive behavior and teacher perception of principal effectiveness (.880); supportive behavior

and teacher perception of extra effort (.793); and supportive behavior and teacher perception of satisfaction with leadership (.885). There is also a significant correlation between teacher perception of supportive behavior and other areas of school climate. The correlation between supportive behavior and engaged behavior is .608, which is significant. However, there is also a significant negative correlation of -.500 between supportive behavior and frustrated behavior. Teacher perception of supportive behavior is significantly correlated with intimate school climate (.338).

Principals who exhibit supportive behavior are intentional about providing feedback to staff and recognize both positive and constructive feedback can provide motivation. They set expectations, model the behaviors they want staff to demonstrate and find ways to be assist and be helpful. They also develop strong professional and personal relationships with their staff by demonstrating authentic interest and concern for their welfare. Principals who demonstrate supportive behavior take an interest in the social and professional achievements of their staff (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991).

Leading in PLA Schools is a bold process of shifting the culture and climate of the school. It also involves evaluating and reshaping policies, procedures, and practices that may either contribute or interfere with the teaching and learning process. In this environment of accountability for student achievement results, principals must understand and skillfully execute the change process to be effective. Principals must have the ability to confront ineffective teaching practice, and at the same time also demonstrate support for staff in the process of improving. Strong

professional relationships are required in order for the change process to be successful. Principals who facilitate supportive behaviors take the time to build relationships and establish trust with their staff. Staff are more willing to try to change instructional practices, learn new ways of teaching, and take risks when they are rewarded and perceive they are supported.

The negative correlation between supportive behavior and frustrated behavior is significant enough that principals leading in PLA schools need to consider how the lack of exhibiting supportive behavior will likely result in a dysfunctional learning environment that interferes rather than contributes to strong professional relationships. Fullan (2001) found the

> "single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better. If they remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus, leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups---especially with people different than themselves" (Fullan, 2001, p. 5).

Engaged Behavior and the Outcome of Principal Leadership

Teacher perception of engaged behavior had a significant correlation with the outcome of principal leadership in the areas of effectiveness (.392), extra effort (.793), and satisfaction with leadership (.885). The relationship between teacher perception of engagement and supportive behavior is statistically significant, with a coefficient of (.608). There is also a negative correlation between engagement and

frustrated behavior (-.392). Additionally, the correlation between teacher perception of engagement and intimate behavior (.338) was significant.

There is evidence of positive morale and pride in the learning community when the staff is fully engaged. Staff support each other and often develops tightly woven personal and professional relationships. Teachers demonstrate their commitment to students' success and also develop positive relationships with their students. The learning community is generally optimistic that students have potential and are able to learn (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). Staff demonstrate respect for others, value the strengths of their peers, and help each other in the process of improving. There is a sense of collective efficacy to tackle complex problems and a belief that success is possible when there is a high level of engagement in a school. In such environments, it is natural for teachers to interact and plan in a collaborative manner, participate in professional learning communities, or accept assistance from an instructional coach or mentor. Teachers help each other and trust each other to provide constructive feedback. They are willing to enter into deeper levels of dialog that are learning focused. These conversations move beyond pleasantries and kind remarks; they help each other identify the root of the problem and seek solutions together. Teachers tend to "share educational values, work together to pursue professional development opportunities and are committed to improving their work" (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p 50).

Principals in PLA schools need to be mindful of the significant negative correlation between engaged behavior and frustrated behavior. Frustrated behavior

interferes rather than contributes to developing the strong professional relationships and increased collaboration that are necessary for improving schools. Chenoweth (2009) wrote about several schools that have made significant improvements. Teacher collaboration and building personal relationships were two factors that Chenoweth found made an impact in the ability to change patterns of performance in low-performing schools.

Intimate School Climate and the Outcome of Principal Leadership

Teacher perception of intimate school climate impacts staff willingness to extend extra effort. There was a significant positive correlation between teacher's perception of intimate school climate and their perception of the extra effort (.341) outcome of principal leadership Intimate behavior was significantly correlated to other areas of school climate including supportive behavior (.338) and engaged behavior (.388). Intimate school climate is the interconnected social relationships among the school staff. Teachers are familiar with each other and develop relationships on a personal level. It is not uncommon for teachers to socialize and spend time outside of school together when there is an intimate school climate (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). This means it is also important to create a near family-like work environment that is welcoming and inclusive toward all members of the staff. Intimate school climate has a distinct feel and tone; there are often unwritten rules and norms that are difficult for new staff or outsiders know without someone extending the effort to take them underwing or mentor them. Developing this type of school climate is an intentional process of inviting new members of the staff to be

part of the school community. Building relationships and finding time to celebrate personal milestones, providing support during personal difficulties, and participating in social times outside of work contributes to teachers feeling a personal obligation and commitment toward their work and ultimately results in a willingness to extend extra effort towards their areas of responsibility.

Each of the RTT reform models requires large scale changes to occur in the school. This means teachers often required to move from their deep-seated positions and work differently. Intimate behavior should not be dismissed as nicety; it contributes a principal's ability to lead a successful turnaround in a PLA school. Teachers are more inclined to extend extra effort to learn new to teaching strategies and implement new initiatives when they are more intimately connected in their work environment.

Directive Behavior and Frustrated Behavior

Teacher perception of directive behavior does not impact the outcome of principal leadership but is correlated with high levels of frustration that has a negative impact on the outcome of principal leadership. There was not a significant correlation between teacher perception of directive behavior and any area of the outcome of principal leadership, but it is noted there is a significant positive correlation of .332 between directive behavior and frustrated behavior that are specific areas of school climate. Principals who consistently demonstrate directive behavior are more rigid in their management style and tend to tightly supervise all aspects of the school environment (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). Consequently,

frustration among staff increases and negative behaviors begin to distract from the central purpose of teaching and learning in schools. Staff generally demonstrate disdain and disrespect for others instead of recognizing and valuing contributions made by their peers and supporting each other in the collective effort to improve (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). PLA schools have an urgent problem that needs to be addressed as the consequences for failing to take action to make improvement in the school setting results are extreme. It would not be unusual for principals and other school leaders to respond by engaging in directive behaviors such as tightening expectations, procedures and routines to achieve an expected result; however, Fullan (2006) cautioned readers that "command-and-control strategies" often do achieve the expected result but do not result in systematic long term change p. 37).

There was a negative correlation between teacher perception of frustrated behavior and the outcome of principal leadership in the areas of effectiveness (-.390), extra effort (-.338), and satisfaction with leadership (.-470). It should be noted that the only area of school climate that frustrated behavior had a positive correlation with was directive behavior (.332). Frustrated behavior results in a dysfunctional school climate to the point staff relationships are impaired, staff consider their peers bothersome, and staff interfere with the collective efforts of the school to move in a more positive direction (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). Teachers no longer perceive their principal to be effectively meeting student or staff needs, representing staff interests, fulfilling general requirements or facilitating groups or meetings (Avoilo & Bass, 2007). There is a general sense of dissatisfaction with principal

leadership, and staff willingness to extend extra effort to do more than what is required or have a desire for others to succeed is diminished (Avoilo & Bass, 2007, p. 105). When school climate has declined to such high levels of frustration the leadership efforts are generally foreclosed from any meaningful impact on the learning community and improved student learning results are unlikely as there is limited staff buy-in and the staff are unwilling to extend the effort necessary to follow through on required changes. Superintendents and other leadership responsible for principal evaluation need to carefully consider to what extent principal leadership has created a strong climate that is conducive to facilitating change or if the relationship has deteriorated to a point that frustrated behaviors and lack of confidence in the principal's leadership is beyond repair. If the relationship is severely fractured, critical decisions need to be made to either retain or terminate the principal and teaching staff.

Gender, Experience, and Assigned Content Areas

Teachers perceive the outcome of principal leadership and school climate is viewed similarly regardless of their gender, experience or assigned content area. There were no statistically significant differences in school climate in PLA Schools based on teacher years of experience, gender or content area. This finding is contrary to the initial presupposition. In a study of teacher perception of principal leadership, school climate and violence in middle schools, Clabough (2006) also found male and female teachers had similar perceptions of principal leadership and school climate. Teachers who are assigned to teach in core content areas that are tested on the Iowa

Assessments carry a heavy burden to produce academic results, as do support teachers who are largely responsible for providing remedial instruction for students with academic deficiencies. Teachers who are assigned to teach in non-core areas are providing valuable learning experiences for students, but do not have the same level of accountability for increasing academic performance as other staff members. Staff members with additional years of experience have more experience with both past and current administration. These experiences that may be both positive and negative contribute to the development and influence their perception of the outcome of principal leadership and school climate. Whereas new staff members have limited prior knowledge and background to consider as they reflect on these same areas. This means the teachers in this setting collectively perceive they have highly effective principals, they are satisfied with their leadership and they are also willing to extend the extra effort necessary to go above and beyond to accomplish necessary tasks regardless of their differences. On the contrary, Clabough (2006) found first year teachers to have different perceptions of principal leadership and school climate. Leithwood et.al. indicated "leadership in a school is second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (2004, p. 3). The results of the study suggest these schools are primed with the leadership and school climate to experience great academic gains, yet each of the schools remains identified as a PLA school. This study was designed to measure teacher perception and did not include responses from principals, supervisors, or other stakeholders. Teachers who participated in this study may not fully understand

the principal leadership traits, skills, and abilities that are necessary to effectively lead the school improvement and change process in a manner that achieves academic results. It would be beneficial to conduct additional research to further understand how teacher perception of principal leadership and school climate correlates with increased student achievement in PLA schools.

Dantow and Stringfield (2011) stated a critical concern about the skill set and ability of principals; they at times lack the experience and background necessary to make key decisions about how to turn the school around. While dictating or forcing a school improvement path is not an approach that will result in long term sustained results, principals need to be "well-informed" (Dantow & Stringfield, 2011, p. 192) stewards of the related issues (strengths and weaknesses) and provide leadership in the identification of system-wide reforms. Principals also need to help teachers develop the capacity to be critical partners in the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of a school and to consider how reform may improve the school (Dantow & Stringfield, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research

Teacher perceptions of the outcome of principal leadership and school climate in PLA middle schools that participated in this study were exceptionally high and statistically significant. Although, the results of the study are difficult to generalize due to the limited sample size and elimination of schools that demonstrated any form of participation resistance from the central office or building principal. This created a

situation where all schools that were included in the study were strictly voluntary, had principals that were fully aware of and supportive of the purpose of the study, and actively encouraged staff to participate.

There was a statistically significant positive relationship between two of the areas of positive school climate (supportive behavior, engaged behavior) and all three areas of the outcome of principal leadership. There was also a statistically significant positive relationship between school climate (intimate behavior) and extra effort which was associated with the outcome of principal leadership. There was a statistically significant negative relationship between negative school climate (frustrated behavior) and the outcome of principal leadership. While it is not possible to accurately determine what the results of the study might have been had all of the schools been included, the additional data would have added value to the study. It is recommended a similar study be conducted in a manner that would not require district or principal consent. This is not to suggest researchers should violate ethical considerations, rather that they structure the study so the survey would be completed in collaboration with a third party such as the state or local education association.

Principals must be cognizant of how their leadership impacts school climate and also how teachers perceive their leadership. When teachers perceive their principals are effective and are satisfied with their leadership, they are willing to try harder and increase the quality of their work. Teacher's perceptions of school climates with supportive behavior and engaged behavior are strongly related to their perception of principal effectiveness, willingness to extend extra effort, and

satisfaction with leadership. However, further research is necessary to examine the relationship between teacher perception, principal leadership, school climate, and increased student achievement in PLA schools.

While dictating or forcing a school improvement path is not an approach that will result in long term sustained results, principals need to be "well-informed" stewards of the related issues (strengths and weaknesses) and provide leadership in the identification of system-wide reforms (Dantow & Stringfield, 2011, p. 192). Principals also need to help teachers develop the capacity to be critical partners in the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of a school and to consider how reform may improve the school (Dantow & Stringfield, 2011).

Superintendents and other leadership responsible for principal evaluation need to carefully consider to what extent principal leadership has created a strong climate that is conducive to facilitating change or if the relationship has deteriorated to a point that frustrated behaviors and lack of confidence in the principal leadership is beyond repair. There is a general sense of collective efficacy to tackle complex problems and a belief that success is possible when teachers have a positive perception of principal leadership and school climate that contributes to changing a persistently lowest-achieving school into a successful turnaround.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

S-A	Years of experience teaching in the school
S-A	Gender: Male, Female
S-A	Content Area: Tested Core Instruction (Math, Reading, English or Language Arts), Non Tested Core Instruction (Science or Social Studies) Support Teacher (Special Education, English Language Learners, Title I, or Talented and Gifted) Exploratory or Elective courses (Physical Education, Art, Music, World Languages, or other)
OCDQ RS	The mannerisms of teachers at this school are annoying.
OCDQ RS	Teachers have too many committee requirements.
OCDQ RS	Teachers spend time after school with students who have individual problems.
OCDQ RS	Teachers are proud of their school
OCDQ RS	The principal sets an example by working hard himself/herself.
OCDQ RS	The principal compliments teachers.
OCDQ RS	Teacher-principal conferences are dominated by the principal.
OCDQ RS	Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.
OCDQ RS	Teachers interrupt other faculty members who are talking in faculty meetings.
OCDQ RS	Student government has an influence on school policy.
OCDQ RS	Teachers are friendly with students.
OCDQ RS	The principal rules with an iron fist.
OCDQ RS	The principal monitors everything teachers do.
OCDQ RS	Teachers' closest friends are other faculty members at this school.
OCDQ RS	Administrative paper work is burdensome at this school.
OCDQ RS	Teachers help and support each other.

OCDQ RS	Pupils solve their problems through logical reasoning.
OCDQ RS	The principal closely checks teacher activities.
OCDQ RS	The principal is autocratic.
OCDQ RS	The morale of teachers is high.
OCDQ RS	Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.
OCDQ RS	Assigned non-teaching duties are excessive.
OCDQ RS	The principal goes out of his/her way to help teachers.
OCDQ RS	The principal explains his/her reason for criticism to teachers.
OCDQ RS	The principal is available after school to help teachers when assistance is needed.
OCDQ RS	Teachers invite other faculty members to visit them at home.
OCDQ RS	Teachers socialize with each other on a regular basis.
OCDQ RS	Teachers really enjoy working here.
OCDQ RS	The principal uses constructive criticism.
OCDQ RS	The principal looks out for the personal welfare of the faculty.
OCDQ RS	The principal supervises teachers closely.
OCDQ RS	The principal talks more than listens.
OCDQ RS	Pupils are trusted to work together without supervision.
OCDQ RS	Teachers respect the personal competence of their colleagues.
MLQ	Copyright restrictions prohibit the duplication of the MLQ Questions.

Appendix B:YouTube Link

The YouTube video used to promote this study was produced by Bradley Burke of Burck Communication at burckcommunications.com.

http://youtu.be/szgNGvh6tTM

Appendix C: Permission Letters

[redacted] | [redacted]

December 30, 2014

Ms. Kerri Nelson
7351 30th Ave.
Atkins, IA 52206

Ms. Nelson,

Your proposal to conduct a research study with the purpose of exploring the relationship between principal leadership and school climate in PLA middle schools in Iowa as perceived by teachers has been reviewed. Your request is approved at the district level for the participation of teachers at [redacted], and [redacted] Middle Schools.

Please follow up with me to work out the logistics of sending the survey to teachers. I would prefer the survey to be email out directly from the building principal or me. We will also need to share survey plans with principals, so they are equipped to answer questions from teachers.

You may contact me by phone at (515) 242-7664 or by e-mail if you have questions. We wish you success in this endeavor.

Best regards,

Mary Grinstead

Mary Grinstead, Ph.D.
Assessment Supervisor

cc: [redacted], Principal, [redacted] Middle School
[redacted], Principal, [redacted] Middle School
[redacted], Principal, [redacted] Middle School

[redacted]ublic Schools

McNulty, Charles <mcnultyc@[redacted]>
To: Kerri Nelson <kerrinelson@[redacted]>

Mon, Dec 22, 2014 at 12:25 PM

Ms. Nelson,

I have gotten confirmation from [redacted] regarding his support of your research at [redacted] Middle School in the [redacted] Community School District.

Sincerely,

Charles

From: Kerri Nelson [mailto:kerrinelson@s-tama.k12.ia.us]
Sent: Friday, December 19, 2014 5:04 PM
To: McNulty, Charles; Armstrong, Linda
Subject: Just need email confirmation

Dr. McNulty,

I hope you received everything we discussed. I briefly spoke with Linda today and she suggested that you had. I just need a brief statement confirming you are okay with me proceeding at this point. Email is sufficient.

Thank you for all your help with this.

Kerri

--

Kerri L. Nelson
Superintendent
[redacted]

4/16/2015 10:02 PM